



THE VIOLET

OF

OUR VILLA.

MISS HENRY L. KOTLER

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THE VIOLET OF OUR VILLA.

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A SKETCH  
OF THE  
LIFE AND VIRTUES  
OF  
MISS ERNESTINE RODIER,  
A PUPIL  
OF THE GRADUATING COURSE  
OF  
VILLA MARIA.

By a SISTER GRADUATE.

MAY 1st, 1875.

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TO DEAR MADAM C. S. RODIER,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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We wish this small volume to stand as a memorial of the affectionate intercourse, which existed between our much loved Ernestine and her sister Graduates who have been taught, together, to love Jesus and Mary.

May it also prove a solace to the grief and sorrow of the fond parent's heart, for the loss of her angelic daughter, is the earnest prayer, of the pupils of Villa Maria.

CONG. DE N. D., May 1st, 1875.

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THE VIOLET  
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CONG. DE NOTRE DAME.

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THE large family of the Congregation of N. D., composed of upward of 15,700 members including the pupils, is, we are proud to say, the garden of the Immaculate Virgin. This celestial Queen cultivates, with truly maternal solicitude, each little flower in order to render it worthy to be presented to her divine Son. With what complacency does she not consider their variegated beauty, when she sees each and all correspond with her care, and raising towards Heaven their beautiful corollas. Oh! it is then we behold that amiable mother surveying with pleasure her delicious parterre, culling some-



times a rose, at others a daisy or a hyacinth. On the present occasion it is a modest violet we see detached from its fragile stem, and transplanted to the celestial regions.

This flower recently culled, is known to you all, dear Children of Mary. It is our loved Ernestine. Weep not for her parents who loved her so well, and you, her friends, who were so tenderly and sincerely attached to her; rejoice rather; her destiny is glorious!

She is only gone in advance of us to our heavenly home by a few days. And yet she has not gone entirely, for her mortal remains repose quite near, at a few steps from this Convent she so dearly loved—this Villa, where her young friends, her last companions, knew her, loved her. She now lies hidden in a recess of our mountain, she sleeps in her quiet tomb; but as the chrysalis, at its awaking, her holy body sanctified by the practice of every christian virtue, shall be glorious and immortal. And her soul! Oh it is in our midst! there, from behind that lovely azure

veil, she sees us, she invites us to follow in her footsteps, that we may some future day participate in her happiness. One day, sweet thought! we shall be associated to her happiness, and we also through this transparent veil shall look down on our earthly friends, and bear their wishes to the Almighty whom we shall see face to face. In order to attain this end let us imitate our regretted classmate. A word on the virtues of our young friend.

Miss Ernestine Rodier was born in Montreal, on the 25th of December, 1859; her young mind was formed from infancy to the practice of virtues superior to her age. From her most tender childhood she was remarkable for her politeness and respect, and so obedient, her good mother assured us she was never found wanting in that respect. If at times her younger brothers did not immediately conform to the desires of her dear parents, Ernestine would give them a sweet reprimand and run quickly to embrace her father or mother, saying: "You know,

dear papa, or mamma, that they do not intend to grieve you ; those little ones are so thoughtless they do not know what they are doing." To her submission Ernestine joined that delicacy of sentiment which characterizes favored souls. The mere thought of giving pleasure to her parents and at a later period to her teachers removed all obstacles ; in like manner, the fear of giving them anxiety induced her, as her journal tells us, to keep from them the secret of her moral or physical sufferings.

During her last illness, she would rarely acknowledge her sufferings, lest she should alarm her dear parents ; and she succeeded so well, that she removed all uneasiness from her mother and her sisters, though convinced herself she was beyond recovery ; this was a little secret revealed to one of her teachers.

At the age of 8 years, Ernestine was placed under the care of the Sisters of the Congregation at St. Anthony's Academy. In school she was remarkable for her docility, respect for

her teachers, condescension to her companions: all this being attributed to a happy disposition and early home training. Having attained her tenth year she was admitted to her First Communion, for which she prepared with a great spirit of faith and delicacy of conscience. Her virtues seemed to increase as she increased in years. Even at that tender age she recited long prayers and assisted at all the offices of the Church with a devotion which edified those who accompanied her.

We may date from the month of Mary, 1872, the manifestation of those amiable virtues which rendered her so agreeable to God, and so dear to those who knew her. At that period Ernestine was received into the Society of the Children of Mary, fully understanding the sweet obligations which this title imposed, and daily making conscientious efforts to imitate her Blessed Mother, for whom she always evinced a tender and sincere devotion, receiving all from Mary and referring all to her honor; even new

articles of toilet she would wear for the first time on a Saturday, in order to honor her heavenly Mother.

This love of the Blessed Virgin inspired her with many practices of devotion, as her journal testifies: "Daily recitation of the Rosary, daily "visit to my Blessed Mother in one of her sanctuaries, and above all in the chapel of my "Convent; Oh! how I love this sanctuary! "How good God is to me here! How many "graces has the Blessed Virgin showered upon "me!" Further on, we read: "Offerings to my "dear Mother. Three spiritual roses every day "of my life, these three roses will be three acts "of charity towards my neighbor."

During Lent and Advent, the month consecrated to the dead, and that dedicated to the Sacred Heart, she adds to the three roses, five acts of mortification, and her journal was not interrupted till a few days before her death, bearing testimony of her fidelity to the end in these holy practices of love for Mary.

What treasures of merit were not acquired before God by this modest young girl! in no way distinguished from her companions except by a more winning kindness towards all. So virtuous a life was not the result of an indifferent disposition, as we will see from the following quotation, April 11th, 1873: "My God! how proud I am still, how that offensive word has wounded my feelings! Did I not even feel a desire of revenge, but for Thy love, I wish to suffer all." In the evening she adds: "Thanks, my God! I said nothing, answered nothing, to that injury. I thanked that person for what she did, and I beg of you to bless her." In the month of October of the same year, our dear Ernestine followed for the last time the exercises of the annual retreat with her companions of the Academy. On the 21st, she writes as follows: "How happy I am! I am in retreat! My God, Thou who seest the depths of my soul Thou knowest how ardently I desire to make this retreat well. I beg of Thee to grant me the

“ grace to know myself, to correct my defects,  
“ and to serve Thee with all my heart; yes, my  
“ God, I will commence from this moment. I  
“ think my predominant fault is pride, yes,  
“ pride! for this afternoon, was I not hurt again  
“ because A—— coldly returned my friendly  
“ greeting. My God, I require humility! I beg  
“ of Thee to grant me this virtue, I wish to do  
“ everything to acquire it. Mary, my loved  
“ Mother, come to my aid, I implore thee.”

Oct. 22nd: “ Yesterday, I was happy; to-day  
“ I am more so. I have finished my general  
“ confession, I will never renew it. To-morrow  
“ I will receive absolution. Thanks my God,  
“ for all this happiness!”

Oct. 23rd: “ O Lord, my heart exults with  
“ joy! To-day is the last day of my retreat.....I  
“ think I made it well, I did all I could; I re-  
“ ceived absolution, what happiness! My God,  
“ before thee I affirm I have nothing on my  
“ conscience; I firmly believe, my dear Saviour,  
“ that if Thou wert to call me, I would be ready



" to undergo Thy judgment, not that I wish to  
 " die now, (unless it were Thy holy will,) for I  
 " wish to do penance for my sins. O, my God!  
 " Thou seest that I have done what I could to  
 " preserve purity of intention, and that I love  
 " Thee more than all I love on earth. To-morrow  
 " I will receive Thee! What joy! Oh! I desire  
 " Thee ardently. I know well I am unworthy to  
 " receive Thee, but I am in great need of Thy  
 " graces to persevere in my good resolutions.  
 " Come, come Lord! What gratitude I owe  
 " Thee! I love but Thee, I rejoice but in Thee;  
 " thanks, thanks my God! I can never repeat it  
 " often enough! Thanks, O my God!"

Oct. 25th: " We finished our retreat yester-  
 " day morning by Holy Communion. What were  
 " not my blissful emotions! I took good reso-  
 " lutions; but that is not all, they must be put  
 " into execution. O Jesus! O Mary! grant me  
 " perseverance. I wish to do everything for  
 " Thy love. " I desire never to offend my God,  
 " rather die than displease His divine majesty.



" Now, to work. I must take up my studies. I  
" wish to begin with all my heart and give good  
" example to my dear companions. May I, dear  
" Lord, never lose Thy divine presence, but be  
" always guided by Thy all-seeing eye." Here is  
a little prayer to the Blessed Virgin copied by  
this pious child of Mary, and which she  
frequently repeated on the days of Holy  
Communion.

Vierge Marie, écoute ma prière,  
Jusques à moi, ton fils daigne venir!  
Je l'ai reçu de tes mains, O ma Mère,  
Et c'est par toi que je veux le bénir.  
Pour l'adorer je sens mon impuissance ;  
Ah ! mets en moi tes transports, ton ardeur,  
Prête ta voix à ma reconnaissance,  
Aime encore Jésus dans mon cœur.

Je tremble, hélas ! pour le Dieu que j'adore,  
Déjà de loin j'entends l'enfer frémir ;  
Tendre Marie, oh ! pour lui, je t'implore,  
Ton amour seul pourra le garantir.  
De ce trésor sois la dépositaire,  
Entre tes mains, je remets mon bonheur ;  
Je t'en conjure, O ma divine Mère,  
Conserve Jésus dans mon cœur.

Now let us see what resolutions were taken by our beloved Ernestine; we find them inscribed in her journal, for she had made this little book her daily confidant.

“1st. I am decided to resist and overcome,  
“with the grace of God, pride, which is my  
“prevailing defect. In order to accomplish this  
“whenever any one wounds my feelings, re-  
“fuses me a service or disturbs me. In the first  
“place, I will say nothing, I will endeavor to  
“have a smiling countenance; in my heart I  
“will humble myself by saying: Who am I? if  
“not a sinner? they treat me even better than  
“I deserve. 2nd. I will say my prayers with  
“great attention. 3rd. I will never say anything  
“that might wound or contradict my neighbor.  
“Jesus and Mary, give me humility, that I may  
“be faithful to these resolutions. 4th: I will  
“pray every day for the poor souls in Purgato-  
“ry, especially the soul which is most aban-  
“doned. I offer all the masses I shall hear for it,  
“all those which are said all over the universe,

" all my actions, my aspirations, the palpitations  
" of my heart, as so many acts of expiation, and  
" all my sufferings and the indulgences which  
" I can gain. 5th. I will recall to mind the pre-  
" sence of God and live under His paternal eye,  
" wishing to accomplish in all things His most  
" holy will."

Let us continue the pious lecture of Ernestine's journal, it will record her fidelity to these fervent resolutions. One month later, November 28th: " I have just read over what I  
" wrote during the retreat; yes, my dispositions  
" then were good, have I persevered in them?  
" My God, Thou knowest that assisted by Thy  
" powerful aid I have been faithful to my duty,  
" but I regret not having made more acts of  
" mortification. Oh! may I have strength and  
" perseverance to the end." January 20th.  
" " How I have suffered physically to-night! but  
" all for Thee, my God. I thank Thee for these  
" little sufferings. May they prove my love  
" for Thee."

Feb. 24th: "For a whole month I had the  
"consolation of not missing mass once, and I  
"believe I have done my utmost each time to  
"hear it well; this august mystery does me an  
"immense good. We are in Lent, I wish to  
"redouble my acts of mortification, as compen-  
"sation for the fast enjoined by the Church.  
"Holy Mother, help me, bless your child."

With regard to these little mortifications of which our dear Ernestine speaks, we have the testimony of her pious mother, who assures us that she often surprised this dear child using towards herself rigors of which she could not have supposed the possibility. Sometimes, she says, I besought her to forbear. "Ernestine smilingly would reassure me, saying: "Really, mamma, I do not practice mortification to injure me in any way." Then she would adopt another method of suffering in order to elude her mother's observation.

Towards the end of February she became weaker, frequently suffering from violent pains

in her side, and from palpitation of the heart, which caused her great difficulty in breathing; still no complaint escaped her lips. If we perceived it by the alteration of her countenance she would gaily answer: "Oh! I see, it is my countenance that is again at fault! What would you have! I was always pale." But in her little journal we read as follows: March 5th, "My God, what a sacrifice I have to make every morning getting up, going to school, I am so weak that I often shed tears without being able to overcome my feelings; but, O Lord, it is for Thy love that I make these little offerings. Thanks for giving me the opportunity. They are meritorious in Thine eyes; Thou alone seest them. Bless me, dear Saviour, and Mary, my sweet Mother, be always my protectress."

March 6th.—Ernestine, who followed the exercises of the month of St. Joseph, to this dear Saint of interior souls she confided her secrets, and placed them at the foot of his altar in the chapel; there they were found after her death. We

inscribe them textually as well as all the extracts from her journal, so as to leave to these quotations that perfume of piety which seems so natural to our dear sister Graduate. " My good " Father St. Joseph, with the firm conviction " that you will grant me whatever I ask, I beg " of you, glorious saint, to grant me a spirit of " piety, humility and charity. I implore you to " obtain for papa, mamma, my sisters and my " brothers the graces they require. I beg for " all my friends and teachers the same favors. " Good St. Joseph, bless my family, and obtain " for the Children of Mary the spirit of piety. " Protect our Holy Father Pius IX., the whole " Church, all the Clergy, and especially my dear " country, Canada. Glorious and powerful St. " Joseph, obtain for me the grace to follow the " will of God later in the choice of a state of " life. Finally, I earnestly implore you for the " conversion of ..... and that of all sinners " Yes, good St. Joseph, hear the prayer of your " confiding child, Ernestine." St. Joseph heard

the prayer of this pious and confiding heart, and obtained for her, as a reward of her humility and charity, the crown of immortal glory which she now enjoys.

Our dear companion continued with ardor the work of her sanctification; the end of the scholastic year approached rapidly, she wrote in her journal:

June 14th.—“ I have studied a great deal for  
“ my reviews, they will take place to-morrow.  
“ With the grace of God I hope to succeed, in  
“ order to please my dear teachers, who have  
“ given themselves so much trouble to instruct  
“ me; really I will never be able to repay their  
“ devotedness. Now, for my spiritual state  
“ how do I stand? My God, Thou alone knowest  
“ it well! It is true that I make every effort to  
“ please you, and to become better. I sometimes  
“ have those sweet moments of happiness in  
“ which I love you so much, my Jesus, but I  
• “ dread my weakness! Alas! at other times my  
“ heart is cold. Oh! I beg of Thee give me more

"love. I wish to please Thee. I wish to become  
"the angel of little sacrifices, of whom that  
"admirable book 'Paillettes d'Or' speaks.  
"Thanks, my God, for having placed that little  
"work in my way, it did me so much good.  
"Bless the author of it, and bring him to Hea-  
"ven. To become the angel of little sacrifices  
"is very difficult to my proud and haughty  
"nature, it will require time, but with Jesus  
"and Mary I hope to succeed." On the  
evening of that same day, before retiring to rest,  
our little friend wrote her requests to the  
Sacred Heart of Jesus. We find them on a  
detached leaf, that she might always wear them  
as the expression of her heart's constant prayer.

"A list of my requests to the Sacred Heart of  
"Jesus :

"O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I beg of Thee to  
"grant me grace to save my soul, grant me  
"humility to bear my little humiliations,  
"patience to support contradictions and suffer-  
"ings, charity never to offend my neighbor, and



“ in his absence never to allow his reputation to  
“ be injured, as far as it lies in my power; but  
“ this is not all, loving Jesus: guard me against  
“ distractions in my prayers; give me courage;  
“ my heart is cold, inflame it with Thy love,  
“ and grant me grace not to omit any occasion  
“ of doing penance and increase my sorrow for  
“ my faults. O Lord, grant me a thousand other  
“ things that I do not know, and of which I may  
“ stand equally in need. Bless me, I wish to  
“ do all for Thy love. Thou, O God! knowest my  
“ thoughts, purify them, and make them worthy  
“ of Thee, O my God!”

The month of July arrived, and the distribution of prizes took place; she received the well merited honors of her Course, which she finished successfully. On July 11th she writes: “ Al-  
“ ready the eleventh day of my vacation! how  
“ quickly time passes! I am so happy with my  
“ parents, who surround me with so much  
“ affection. We all start for the country on  
“ Tuesday, otherwise there would be no plea-

"sure. We are going to Beauharnois. I am so  
"happy. We will be quiet there, almost soli-  
"tary, but we will have the Blessed Sacrament  
"under the same roof with us. Thanks, my God!  
"for having placed me so near Thee during my  
"vacations. I will try to become better. My  
"poor soul has undergone many violent temp-  
"tations. I have neglected several occasions of  
"self-denial, I will avail myself of others by  
"way of compensation. Mary, my good  
"Mother, you possess my heart, place therein  
"humility, patience and meekness."

It was really in company with our dear Lord  
that Ernestine spent her vacations as her mother  
remarked, witness of the angelic piety of her  
dear child. Besides her morning visit to the  
chapel which she never missed, on returning  
from a walk her first greeting was to Jesus in  
the Blessed Eucharist. When the family re-  
turned to their city residence, at the end of Au-  
gust, it was decided that Ernestine should go to  
Villa Maria, to follow the Graduating Course,

which was a great sacrifice to this poor child who had never yet left the paternal roof, but she cheerfully submitted, happy to present this act of abnegation to her divine Savoir.

September 1st.—The Angelus had just pealed its last joyous note of welcome to the happy pupils of Villa Maria, and many a hasty congratulation had been exchanged, when, from the Graduating Course down to the Junior Class, all began to examine their ranks, not simply for the pleasure of realizing their numerical standing, but to learn if one and all of their happy groups were complete, or what new acquisitions had been added to each Course.

The Graduates numbered twenty-two, when all united to intone the Magnificat, our Mother's Canticle of gratitude. Our dear Ernestine, though somewhat sad on finding herself separated from her cherished parents for the first time, nevertheless overcame herself sufficiently to enter into the sentiments of her sister graduates, and seemed to enjoy fully the picturesque

scenery, the promenades and pastimes of her Villa home.

The following day, conversing with a pupil who appeared lonesome : " Ah ! " said she, " if we " have a few privations here, have we not " enough to compensate for them ? Where could we find such magnificent scenery, delightful walks, and brilliant parterres, such a lovely lake surrounded by shady groves, and covered with the pleasure boats of our dear companions ; but above all, our exquisitely beautiful *calm* and *holy* chapel, where we are free from all care and danger, ever guarded by the maternal eye of Mary." In this manner she consoled her young friend, utterly forgetful of self.

On entering the Graduating Class, the call of duty was ever foremost in her mind, and by constant application and piety she surmounted every difficulty, being always the model of her class. Her room-mate, Miss M. S., thus speaks of her : " When I see with what angelic piety Ernestine kneels before her little statue of the

Blessed Virgin, I say, if all that Catholics teach concerning devotion to the Mother of God be true, that young girl will surely succeed well in every duty here, and gain an imperishable crown hereafter. What would I not give to resemble her ! She seems so sweet, so happy. Such were the impressions made in a short time by Ernestine on a young girl of eighteen, who ignored both her language and her religion ; but no selfish motive prompted Ernestine in her practices of devotion ; and the sequel will show what example can accomplish.

The daily promenades of our scholastic year had commenced ; for one and all, these salutary walks are a source of pleasure, but to this dear child of Mary they became so many pilgrimages. With what accents of devotion, relate her companions, did she not unite in our joyous concerts, when firmly seated in our small boats, with oars in hand, plying swiftly through the limpid waters of our miniature lake, rivaling each other who would first reach our Lady

of the Woods, to intone the Magnificat, so dear to us all. On another occasion, returning from one of our gay promenades, we fortunately passed by a garden where the melons appeared very tempting, some seemed falling from the stem: there is no harm, said one to another, in picking up one, and we shall have a little treat, by way of amusement; a straw hat covered with fresh leaves served as a basket, and to complete the little feast a few tempting tomatoes were thrown into the new basket, and anything else that seemed ready to fall from the parent stem.

On reaching the terrace we hastened to divide our booty, and each enjoyed the feast with great relish, Ernestine being the only one who refused to partake of it; one of her companions said, "Oh! for my part I never refuse the manna when it falls into my cup, and we know that Mother Superioress is too good to consider our little feast as a theft;" still she was struck by the delicacy manifested by Ernestine who persisted in her refusal.

Another of our favorite walks was N. D. de Toutes Graces. Ernestine would say to her companions, "How I love to pray in that church, it bears such a glorious title." Going thither on one occasion, she said to M. L. L., "I am going to recite the Rosary for you, will you not say yours for me?" "Oh! yes," replied her companion, "so that we may obtain all the graces prepared for the faithful graduate during her last year. Ernestine after a moment's reflection said, "I do not think I will finish this year, I believe death is not far distant." Henceforward, says the same young person, I never looked at Ernestine without thinking that my dear young friend predicted the truth: her delicate health, her sweetness, her piety, all confirmed me in the opinion that she was called to a better world; and the same evening I communicated my thoughts concerning Ernestine to Mother St. C., a teacher of the Graduating Course.

An undergraduate receiving from home some pious pictures, just met Ernestine, whom she

only knew by seeing her in the chapel or in the dining-room, but to whom she looked up with affection, said to her, "You would give me much pleasure, Miss Rodier, by accepting one of these pictures." With that amiable simplicity that ever characterized Ernestine, she selected one, affectionately thanking her young friend: the title, "The Entrance of a Child of Mary into Heaven." This picture with its pious sentiments became her daily guide, and she would change it from one book to another in order not to lose sight of it. One of her companions, G. de G., observing this, if the picture was forgotten, she would admonish Ernestine with mock gravity; Ernestine would receive the rebuke smilingly and hasten to find her treasure, adding at the same time, "it is so very pretty."

Very different was her expression, remarked her gay friend, when I would speak during silence. Then she would say, "speak no more, this is not right; remember we should be the first to give example."



When the Superioress of the Villa would meet Ernestine, and with maternal kindness urge her not to fatigue herself by study, and add, "when you feel weak go to the dining-room and take some refreshments; besides, when you are fatigued in the class-room, ask your teachers to give you a companion to go out on the lawn," she would return to her companions covered with confusion, saying with tears in her eyes, "How good the Superioress is! How kind to me! Indeed all the nuns and pupils are so devoted that I am ashamed to be so little worthy of their attention;" her humility making her see nothing but kindness and charity in others, as the following extracts from her weekly compositions bear ample testimony:

[First Letter.]

VILLA MARIA, Sept. 5th, 1874.

DEAR FRIEND,

In my last letter I announced the day of my entrance to Villa Maria, so you know by this

time we are busily engaged at our scholastic duties.

This morning we were studying Ancient History. I find it very attractive and instructive: What can be better calculated to excite our curiosity than the recital of the events that have transpired since the creation of the world? What surprises me particularly is, to consider the world in its primitive purity, and to see by what degrees it fell into the greatest corruption, and how slow but sure God is in His chastisements.

My dear, I know how much you like to converse on classical duties, therefore I need not apologize for the dryness of a subject I intend to resume in a few days. When time permits, I will communicate with you freely my impressions on History, Geography, &c., and now I must bid you a hasty good by, but not before embracing you affectionately.

Ever your invariable friend,

ERNESTINE.

[Second Letter to a different friend.]

VILLA MARIA, Sept. 8th, 1874.

DEAR FRIEND,

Do not think I have forgotten my promise of giving you my ideas and feelings concerning convent life, as a boarder.

On arriving at the Villa I found myself preceded by several pupils. Mother Superior and several of the nuns received us very kindly. You may suppose the moment of taking leave of my dear parents came sooner than I expected, and notwithstanding all my good resolutions, the unbidden tear would come in spite of me. However, I was given in charge to some charming companions, their amiability prevailed, and I joined in their amusements without an effort. In the course of the evening we had a grand illumination around the statue of St. Joseph, which is situated in a circular terrace in front of the grand entrance.

Before retiring to our sleeping rooms, we went to the chapel for evening prayers and the Rosary, after which we sang the Magnificat, with organ and full chorus, in order to obtain success for the coming year, by placing ourselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. All the pupils appear delighted to resume their studies; as for myself, you do not expect that I can say precisely the same thing, you must bear in mind that it is the first time I have been separated from my dear parents, still I presume my present feelings will not last long.

You know we have always our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, so I propose to pay many a visit to our dear little chapel, and to have recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary in all my difficulties. In the meantime I shall defer all further communication till I have the pleasure of seeing you.

Ever your affectionate and loving

ERNESTINE RODIER.

## ● [Third Letter.]

VILLA MARIA, Sept. 8th, 1874.

DEAR MOTHER LA NATIVITÉ,

What a happy day this is! It is not only the feast of our Immaculate Mother Mary, but also that of our much loved Mother La Nativité, who is such a good dear Mother to all the favored pupils of the Villa.

Our sentiments are known to you, dear Mother, but words often fail when the heart feels most; suffice to say that our fervent prayers will ascend to the Throne of the Most High, imploring choice blessings on our much loved Mother La Nativité, that she may enjoy long, long years for the consolation of her happy pupils. As for the Graduates who celebrate this festival for the last time in their Villa home, it will form the brightest link in Memory's chain, and as it returns with each revolving year we shall celebrate it in spirit with those who have the happiness of enjoying your maternal care.

With respect and gratitude, Rev. Mother,

Your grateful pupil,

ERNESTINE RODIER.

## [Fourth Letter.]

VILLA MARIA, Sept. 15th, 1864.

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter of the 10th inst. I have just received, and am charmed with the contents; if you wish to give me pleasure, continue to write in this style, such letters are my sweetest recreation.

You want to know how convent life agrees with me, truly I like it better than I expected. I have been here but a short time, and I feel quite at home.

I do not intend to give you an account of my daily life, you have been a pupil here yourself, therefore you know all about our daily routine. I regret your health obliges you to interrupt your studies, I hope in the course of a short time you will be able to resume them. I applaud your resolution of continuing to study at home though you have nearly finished your Course, there are so many things we ignore that we should bestow as

much leisure as is at our disposal to augment our fund of knowledge. Moreover, study is such an agreeable companion of youth, that it should be relinquished with regret.

I congratulate you on the interesting works you intend perusing, and I would request you to give me your impressions on each of them. Now, I must say I expect an occasional visit; the distance from Montreal is not so great, and the drive, or even the walk, should not injure you. You know I will not be the only one delighted to receive you, our kind teachers are always happy to see their former pupils.

In the meantime I request a souvenir in your prayers for my success.

Your ever affectionate friend,

ERNESTINE RODIER.

[Fifth Letter.]

VILLA MARIA, Sept. 28th, 1874.

DEAR FRIEND,

When I cast a glance on the past, and think over our school days, with their joys and

sorrows, all seems like a dream. And how much shorter will not this last year appear, there is so much to be accomplished.

Without doubt the Graduating Course has many charms: in the first place the kindness of our dear teachers, who are so devoted to our improvement, and the amiability of our companions make us almost forget the home circle, or I should say, they form such a good substitute, they leave us almost without a wish.

Our apartments so gay and cheerful, formerly occupied by Lady Elgin, command a magnificent view: beautiful terraces and villas, the city and its environs, the majestic St. Lawrence, all unite to form a beautiful panorama on which the eye wanders at pleasure, until it seeks repose in the azure blue of our heavens, and thence penetrates with love and gratitude the veil that conceals our Heavenly Father, who made all things for the enjoyment of His unworthy children.

Our time is agreeably diversified with



recreations, promenades and charming surprises in one form or another, and I am told this is but the prelude of what follows.

On commencing our course we all took serious resolutions to make the most of this our last year, being convinced that fidelity in this respect is essential to our success; hence you can imagine with what ardor we endeavor to overcome every difficulty, and to avoid these little temptations incidental to the graduating pupil, so that no foul stain may ever tarnish the memory of this year. On the contrary, may it ever prove to us, in the desert of life, that beautiful soft green oasis, where the soul loves to repose from the turmoil and strife of the busy world. Courage then! With the assistance of our dear teachers and the protection of Mary, success must crown the noble aspirations of the Graduates of '75. You will join me, I am sure, in saying Amen.

Yours affectionately,

ERNESTINE RODIER.

October follows with all its joys and vicissitudes, but for our dear Ernestine this month had in store what her pious soul cherished most: prayer, recollection, in a word the Retreat; her desire to profit by it was manifested in her every act, and the holy calm of her soul was depicted in her countenance. Great was her joy when she saw the radiant brow of her dear companion, already alluded to, Miss M. S., after the regenerating waters of Baptism made this amiable friend a child of God and heir of Heaven,—Ernestine being among the privileged few of the Children of Mary present at this blissful ceremony. Oh! how she prayed while her tears flowed plentifully, and, as she afterwards relates she never was so much affected in her life as when she heard her young friend pronounce the "Credo." We regret we cannot find her composition on that occasion.

Her charity was so admirable that no one ever heard her find fault with any of her young friends. Her respectable mother tells us that

she would often say, "you can scarcely imagine how good and pious the pupils are at Villa Maria."

A few days after the retreat our promenade was to the Cemetery; one of her teachers was singularly struck by an answer she received from Ernestine. Seeing her dress to go out, she asked where she was going. "We are going," said Ernestine, "to bring the resolutions of our retreat to the Cemetery; will we not be happy to find them there on a future day?" Her companion along the route observed that she repeated the *De Profundis* almost incessantly. One of her companions, speaking of her, gives this glorious testimony: "Ernestine was a model of humility, self-denial and piety joined to the greatest amiability of character." The same friend adds, "that whilst the graduating pupils were busy preparing an evening's amusement for the sombre soirées of October, Ernestine took part in a little operetta entitled '*L'Esprit et le Cœur*.'—'*Mind and Heart*.' She had to sing

alone, and her voice being weak, she could scarcely reach the highest notes. I accompanied her on the piano; when coming to those notes she would laugh and say, 'for this time I will stop here.' " "The same evening," says one of her classmates, G. L., "she and I had a comic song; we had not time to commit the song to memory, but as it was on the programme, we determined to make the most of it; the beginning went on pretty well, but the end was an extempore after our own fashion, which created peals of laughter. 'No matter,' said Ernestine to G. L., 'we have gained our point, we wished to amuse, and I am sure we have succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectations.' I replied, so much the better, none of the other courses will attempt to surpass us in improvisation." It is one of the customs of the school for each course to give a monthly literary soirée which creates both emulation and amusement.

October left us souvenirs never to be forgotten, they were joyful, pious, and happy; it had

brought us two grand congés, one was given in order to let us assist at the religious profession of a young Graduate of 1871, Miss B. N., who in our midst had learned what it is to be a Catholic and had the courage to embrace Catholicism in the midst of difficulties; she renounced the pomp and vanities of the brilliant circles of society in which she moved to become an humble child of Mary. The same day one of the Graduates of 1874, Miss J. M., gave us an agreeable surprise by her entrance into the Novitiate.

November was ushered in under the most favorable auspices; the eve our teachers announced the special devotion of the coming month. The "Stations of the Cross" were to be made daily; moreover, it was expected we would be as generous as our predecessors in making the sacrifice of our pocket money for the souls in Purgatory. The same evening, I have the pleasure to state, that the Graduates gave a sum necessary for thirty-six masses, and the next

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week their good example had operated so effectively on the other courses, that we were enabled to have one hundred and ninety masses offered for the same end. Ernestine was delighted at this, and on that occasion she said to the Superioress, Mother La Nativité: "Is it not admirable; not a single pupil has been wanting in this pious devotion. Our charity for the souls in Purgatory will bear its fruit in good season, no doubt."

The last souvenirs of our dear Ernestine being attached to the Forty Hours devotion, the piety and fervor with which she followed these holy exercises we can learn from her composition on that occasion :

VILLA MARIA, Oct. 6th, 1874.

DEAR MAMMA,

With what sweet emotions have our hearts overflowed during the "Quarante Ore !" still my enjoyment is never complete till shared with you, my darling mamma. You know this blissful devotion by experience, therefore I need not

describe it; I shall content myself by giving you an account of the closing ceremonies, after assuring you that I never felt more consolation in prayer than during those three days.

Our little chapel was beautifully decorated, all seemed to announce the joy of an Easter festival. At ten o'clock A.M. the priest entered, robed in his richest vestments. Mass being said, we intoned the "Pange Lingua," and the procession was formed in the centre aisle.

The junior pupils opened the march. The different courses were preceded by their respective teachers, who appeared as so many angels leading those young souls to God. The Graduates preceded the Blessed Sacrament, each bearing a taper, and wearing a long white veil. They seemed deeply penetrated with the honor conferred on them. All looked so holy and recollected that we felt transported to the heavenly Jerusalem, to that glorious band of Virgins who are to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. What added to our dream of

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bliss was the beautiful decorations that met our astonished gaze as we passed through the various apartments all having been prepared the night previous, so that we scarcely knew our own apartments. Altars and statues were richly adorned with flowers, and scrolls bearing various inscriptions suitable to the occasion. On passing through the music hall, the harps, pianos and organ sent forth their sweetest notes in homage to the Divine Visitor, thence into the Library, where Mater Admirabilis was surrounded with exquisite flowers and an aureole of lights.

Passing through the central hall we beheld the statue of the admirable foundress of this establishment beneath that of the Immaculate Virgin, on an improvised altar at the entrance of the Community, all surrounded by the richest decorations. At this sight I awoke from my holy reverie to think of the Venerable M. Bourgeois, heroine of Canada, reaping in joy what she had sowed in tears, fancying I heard the Immaculate



Virgin say to her: "Go to Canada! I will not abandon thee!" and our dear Mother Bourgeois, reply, "Blessed Mother, nothing now remains to be done but repeat your own glorious canticle, *Magnificat anima mea Dominum.*" Yes, these words are truly the spirit of her Community of which she may be justly proud, having for over two centuries a succession of children worthy their Immaculate Mother, thereby gloriously accomplishing her promise. During the procession, the most delicious music reverberated from chapel, halls, and music rooms, and made us almost fancy the angels were assisting us; the most profound respect was manifested in every countenance. I felt so happy. I was ready to exclaim: "O Lord it is good for us to be here, let us now fix our tents, &c." I used to envy the happiness of those souls who lived in the time of our Saviour, but now I feel I have nothing to desire.

As my heart turned with love and gratitude to the Author of all bliss, I felt an impression of

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delight never to be effaced. And while I contemplated our dear Mother La Nativité followed by all the pupils into the chapel again, I said to myself: May we not be thus assembled in our Heavenly Home, when we will all be so many gems in the Crown of our loved Mother La Nativité. We can do nothing worthy of her here below, O Lord grant us to be her crown and glory hereafter.

Dear mother, my letter is rather long ; but you know, whether at home or abroad, I must let you know my feelings, as the pleasure of communicating all to you is a double source of enjoyment for your ever loving and grateful child,

ERNESTINE RODIER.

A few days more, and our dear Ernestine is obliged to go home ; her cough begins to excite uneasiness. Ernestine's teachers went frequently to see her, and she herself had paid us a visit about Christmas, therefore, no immediate danger was apprehended.

After leaving the Villa we read as follows, in her journal: "It is from my little blue room, "which I love so much, that I write these lines. "I am now almost three weeks at home surrounded, protected and caressed with the "sweetest and most tender affection, which "would restore me to perfect health, if it were "possible. But I have a very bad cold; this "evening, I feel my chest all on fire. I am "tired and weak, I have coughed so much, but "I will try to forget my sufferings, to talk of "that which fills my soul. I have had the happiness of following the exercises of the retreat "at Notre Dame. I feel that it has done me "good. I received Holy Communion this morning. I am perfectly happy, notwithstanding "my constant sufferings. My Saviour, Thou art "my Lord and Master, remain in my heart, my "true source of happiness, for Thou alone canst "give me true joy.

"But, dear Lord, I still hunger for Thee!  
"When shall I receive Thee again? To-morrow

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"wilt Thou not grant that favor to Thy poor  
"child? yes, to-morrow I will again receive thee.  
"I renew the resolutions which I have already  
"taken for Thy love: to practice humility, to  
"be charitable on every occasion, always appear  
"gay, pleased with what others do, and sacrifice  
"myself for all, as far as lies in my power."

From this moment our dear invalid deceived herself no longer, although her sickness had changes, as she writes in her journal. She commenced her preparations for eternity, but on account of her extreme delicacy of feeling she did not allow her family to perceive that she knew the gravity of her illness, nor what she suffered. She submitted with the most amiable condescension and apparent confidence to take all the remedies prescribed.

The last day of December she wrote to one of her teachers: "You ask me, dear mother, for some news of my poor health, I will tell you frankly, but confidentially, for *here* this would alarm those who surround me, they are all so

kind and watch over me with unequalled tenderness; but, for all that, my cough does not diminish, on the contrary, it is becoming almost incessant, and my nights are sleepless, fever is consuming me! Really, I think it time to prepare for the journey from time to eternity! The holy will of God be done! I only wish and ask for that; otherwise I would not be happy. God is my father, He loves me, and knows better than I what is suitable for me, life or death!

"Death, this word makes me shudder. I do not wish to conceal it, dear mother, it is very sad to die; however, it is the gate by which we must all pass to reach God, I submit to it. It is a sacrifice, but I am happy to make it in expiation of my sins. What pains me most, is to grieve my beloved parents, they are so devoted and love their children so tenderly. I know their grief will be extreme, when I am no longer here to receive their caresses; however, our Lord will console them and you too, dear mother, St. F.B., will you not? Enough! enough!

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I fear to afflict you by my sad missive, forgive me!"

The disease rapidly pursued its work of destruction, and our dear one was so calm, so resigned, that her mother and sisters still hoped to see her recover. Ernestine's good heart was rejoiced by this illusion which gave happiness to those whom she dreaded so much to grieve. Her energy seemed to triumph over her weakness, she spent the day with her family occupied in working for the poor, and two days before her death she was hastening to finish a second pair of stockings, which she had designed for a poor woman. Another instance I must add which occurred shortly before her death: "Dear mother, I never begged a favor for myself, and now I have one to ask? remember you poor child is very unworthy of all the graces that our dear Lord has thought fit to bestow on her. I would not grieve you willingly, my darling mother, but you must know it, I will soon be no more. Will you then for the

love of God, in my name, adopt that poor helpless person.....this will be something to acquit my debt of gratitude to God, and a lasting token of your love for your poor little Ernestine." This truly pious lady did not hesitate an instant to assure her cherished child that her request would be complied with to its full extent.

Feb. 9th.—Our dear Ernestine, who was now confined to the house, received Holy Communion in her room. She thus expresses her happiness to one of her teachers: "Your welcome note would have added to my happiness had it been possible, but I am extremely happy. I have received my divine Saviour, what more can I desire! This communion gave me much consolation; I greatly needed it, dear mother, St. F.B., because for four long weeks my soul has not been strengthened by this heavenly Manna. You know what holy joy a communion brings with it; I have often repeated your sweet invocations. Do not trouble yourself about my sufferings, I beg of you, dear mother; I do not

suffer as much as I should. God has pity on me. Besides, I have my Crucifix here, the statue of the Blessed Virgin in front of me, my angel guardian by my side. With your fervent prayers, those of my family, and Holy Communion this morning, surely my suffering days and nights will always be supportable with such consolations."

This was the last of Ernestine's letters. Her illness made such rapid progress that on the night of the 17th her confessor was hastily called in, and he administered the last sacraments. The next morning, being a little better, she said to one of her friends who appeared greatly afflicted: "I am going to die it is true, but God is good; He calls me to Himself while I as yet have known but His benefits and the tenderness of my loving parents, and kind friends like yourself. He spares me the trials of this life, weep not, I beg of you."

Feb. 19th.—At 9 P.M. she received for the second time the Holy Viaticum and gained the



indulgences of the jubilee. Notwithstanding her extreme weakness she knelt to receive Holy Communion. Her thanksgiving resembled an ecstasy; her face was radiant, every trace of suffering had disappeared to give place to an expression of happiness.

It was only on the eve of her death that we learned she was much worse, and no hope of recovery. This caused quite a sensation. On learning the sad news, we were all anxious to visit her and give her a last proof of our attachment, but this being impossible, three in the name of all were permitted to accompany her teachers,—even the Superioress, Mother La Nativité, though not well, would go herself to see her darling child for the last time. Ernestine recognized them, and looking at them affectionately pressed their hands, being too weak to speak, but she took the hand of the Superioress and kissed it affectionately. One of her companions taking her harp accompanied the others, who sang the consecration of a child of Mary.

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On listening with ecstatic attention to the music, not being able to speak she wrote on a scrap of paper, "Tell them to come nearer, so that I may hear the words." Nothing was more touching than the sweet tones of the harp, mingling with the sad and sympathetic voices of her dear companions, and her music teacher St. S .....

M. L. L. on returning home said, Ernestine had but one great desire, that of pleasing God, her parents and teachers, surely, she has attained the height of her ambition, dying we may almost say in an ecstasy of love for God, surrounded by those she prized most on earth, her parents and teachers. A few hours after their return to the Villa, we received the painful news of her death. The following day we received an invitation for the funeral service. Six of the Graduates were chosen as pall-bearers. Mr. Rodier had the polite attention to send up eight covered carriages, consequently about forty pupils from the Villa attended the funeral, and had the happiness of giving their regretted com-

panion a farewell embrace. A crown, emblematic of the affection of her companions, rested on her spotless remains, bearing an inscription analogous to the sentiments of her heart: "Qu'il est doux d'aimer Jésus. O Ernestine! enfant chérie de Marie, priez pour vos compagnes de Villa Maria."

As the funeral reached the French Cathedral, and the pall-bearers ascended the grand portico, they were joined by their companions who preceded them draped in long white veils, forming a regular line on either side, through which the funeral cortege passed into the church. The service was grand and imposing. Thence we accompanied her to the Cemetery, and returned home to the Villa with sad and holy thoughts. May our death be like Ernestine's, was the general ejaculation.

On entering our little chapel for prayer the same evening, we were forcibly reminded of our dear departed one, seeing her Prie-Dieu and chair draped in white, looped up by frosted

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sprays and knotted with black crape ; her prayer book and favorite picture remained on the Prie-Dieu till the month's mind. The mass was said by her maternal uncle, Rev. P. L. Lapierre ; her father, mother, sisters, and a few select friends, came out to the Villa for that occasion. Our little chapel was festooned from chandeliers to pillars with white tarletan gracefully looped up with crape. After the funeral march, so sad and impressive, the pupils intoned the hymn "*Marie est la porte des Cieux.*" Mass being ended, a few of the pupils took their place in the centre of the chapel, beside her Prie-Dieu, where the harp on which she was wont to play was standing ; they sang once more the consecration of a child of Mary with sympathetic tones more easily felt than described, it being the same hymn they sang for her a few hours previous to her death.

The Rev. Mr. Lapierre made a short and eloquent discourse appropriate to the occasion, but our hearts were too much moved to attempt

to give an account of it. The depths of the soul are sometimes unutterable.

However, we all left the chapel with holy awe and salutary thoughts of our dear departed companion. You, dear Ernestine! we are sure in your glorious Home will not forget us; you will often present us to Jesus and Mary, and bear our hopes to our Immortal Mother, M. Bourgeois, showing her the fruit of her many labors in behalf of Canada, where she delighted to consider her Congregation as the parterre of Mary. Speak also of our loved Villa to the angel guardians of your loving companions, so that all may become lovely flowers, worthy to be transplanted to the Heavenly Jerusalem to share in the everlasting sunshine of the modest violet of our mountain home.

Let us now complete this short notice of the life of this dear child of Mary with the necrological account of it, written by a friendly hand, who better than any one else knew and appreciated our darling sister Graduate. May these

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edifying lines produce in our hearts a love of virtue and the desire of serving God as faithfully as did our regretted companion.

An angel has departed from our midst. Tuesday morning, an immense crowd flocked to the Parish Church, which was draped in deep mourning; the adjoining streets were lined with an eager multitude, all awaited the arrival of a funeral procession. Strangers asked who was this celebrated personage, whose funeral was attended with such pomp. It was but a sweet modest young girl of sixteen, whose mortal remains were brought to receive a last benediction in the church where she had so often prayed.

A young girl, whose daily prayer, found in her journal, was as follows: "O Lord, grant that I may live unnoticed, that I may do good to every one, for Thy love, and that Thou alone mayest know it." And the Lord who has said He will exalt the humble, has honored His humble child, for her praise is in every mouth,

and she obtained even here below general esteem and affection.

Miss Mary Ernestine Rodier, daughter of Mr. C. S. Rodier, jun., was one of those privileged beings our Lord generally lends us for a short time. Pious, mild, grateful, modest, and charitable, all her pleasure consisted in making every one around her happy. She ingeniously acknowledged she took but one resolution every day, that of pleasing all those with whom she might have communication. She adds in her journal: "When at night I find that I have been faithful to my promise, I am not proud of what is so easy, for is there anything so sweet as to please our neighbors?"

On one occasion, conversing with her companions who were making plans for the future, she said: "I know not what will be my mission here below; could I have my wish, it would be a ray of sunshine, which carries joy and happiness wherever it penetrates."

Miss Ernestine Rodier, from her most tender

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age, was confided to the Rev. Srs. of the Congregation of N. D., and during several years she studied with application and success. The remembrance of her virtues will always live in the hearts of her companions, who would all wish to follow her to the abode of the Blessed, as the pen of one of her friends expressed it, in a few lines, In Memoriam, placed in her coffin. The 1st of September, 1874, found her in the establishment of Villa Maria, to follow the Graduating Course. She was not long there before she won the esteem of her teachers and the pupils. After a short stay, she reckoned as many sisters and friends as she had companions. Unfortunately her debility began to give serious anxiety, and her parents judged proper to recall her to the bosom of her family, where the care and the tenderness of a devoted father and of loved brothers and sisters, and all the resources of medical art, contended in vain against the cruel disease of consumption; which carried her off on Saturday, Feb. 20, at 3.35 p.m. Her



last moments were the echo of her whole life, and her death was that of the just. Until the end she showed herself amiable, of an unchangeable serenity ; not being able to speak, she received every one with a smile. Notwithstanding her sufferings she still found means to practice self-denial ; this sister virtue of humility shone particularly in this angel of the earth. The night before her death one of the good religious, who watched by her side, offered her some grapes to refresh her burning chest ; but she answered : " Sister, it is Lent ; it would be an immortification, for I do not require them." Being asked to take something after her medicine, she tearfully begged to be dispensed, saying : " Leave me, I entreat you, the merit of my little sufferings." And added another time, while looking at her kind mother, " Well, mamma, so as not to distress you I accept something, provided you have a mass said each time for the most abandoned souls in Purgatory," and this pious treasure,

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increased by her ingenious mortification, amounted to a pretty large sum which has already been given for the benefit of the poor souls who, abandoned by others, were not forgotten by our angelic little friend.

After her death her countenance acquired a celestial beauty; a ray of that glory which her soul already enjoyed was no doubt reflected on that body sanctified by so many virtues. The young ladies of St. Anthony's Academy in deep mourning, a deputation of forty young ladies, pupils of Villa Maria, an equal number from St. Denis Academy, the community of the Rev. Srs. of the Congregation, deputations from the different other communities, besides a great number of relatives and friends of the family, pressed round the catafalque, and a large number of clergy filled the sanctuary. The maternal uncle of the deceased, Rev. Mr. Lapierre, officiated. The pallbearers: Misses Swift, A. McGarvey, M. L. Levesque, A. Collins, G. de Grosbois, G. Leprohon, with their companions from Villa Maria,

draped in long white veils and the insignia of the Children of Mary. On her coffin some friendly hands had placed two crowns and a cross of flowers.

We will here insert a few lines by one of the Graduates: M. F.

#### IN MEMORIAM.

The sun o'er the mountain his first ray was shedding,  
Lo! all was so tranquil, so holy and fair,  
That well might you pause, and with fondest emotion  
Await to see Angels bright gathering there.

And ah! though I saw not their heavenly faces,  
Full well did I know they were hovering round;  
Their beauty I saw on each object about me,  
Their voices I heard in each soft breathing sound.

And there stood the Villa in grandeur unrivall'd,  
Still charming and sweet as it smiled on the green;  
My heart with my lips in fond harmony murmur'd,  
"How like unto Mary, its Heavenly Queen."

So gently I came to the shrine of our Mother,  
Where fled the brightest of youth's happy hours,  
To feast once again on the wealth of its beauties,  
Inhale the sweet perfume of Mary's dear flowers.

Ah! how can I say with what joy I approach'd them,  
Their vesture still gemm'd with the dewdrops so bright,  
Oh! flow'rs of the mountain of Mary's own Villa,  
Oh! blossoms of faith, of celestial delight.

But of all which I gazed on, one bed was the fairest,  
How each lovely face to the morning inclines ;  
Soon after I heard, those were specially cultur'd,  
Would shortly be scatter'd in various climes.

Still 'twas not the rose that enticed me to linger,  
Nor was it the violet so modest and blue,  
Or the fuchsia, the cactus, the dahlia or tulip,  
'Twas one of more holy, more exquisite hue—

A lily that gracefully waved in the sunlight,  
Her beauty surpassing, I ne'er can forget ;  
The impress she made on my heart is still verdant,  
The awe she awoke in my *soul* is there yet.

So spotless and pure that I knew when I saw her  
'Twas "Israel's Lily," through holiest love,  
Had lent us this fond cherished child of her bosom,  
As a type of the joys which await us above.

Oh! child of the Virgin, blest flow'r of election!  
Oh! beautiful lily, of exquisite worth,  
As I left thee, I fancied the angels were whisp'ring,  
Remember! remember! she is not of this earth.

The sun o'er the mountain his last ray was shedding,  
I anxiously wended my way through the lawn,  
To see, by the soft parting beam of his glory,  
The flow'r which wak'd such emotions at dawn.

I enter'd the garden, what change had stole o'er it?  
Ah! why did each flow'ret dear droop her fair head?  
I paus'd not to ask, but with eager impatience  
I hasten'd to visit my own beloved bed.

I came, but alas! had it all been a vision,  
Had fancy but made me a subject of mirth?  
I turn'd fast away, when lo! soft came the whisper,  
"She's gone, oh! remember, she bloom'd not for earth!"

Yes, gone in the fullness of innocence blest,  
The Angel who spoke that has borne her away;  
He cull'd her ere night's gloomy shades had o'erspread her  
And brought her to regions of glorious day.

And now near the throne of Immaculate Mary,  
'Mid flow'rs like herself our dear lily doth shine;  
All bathed in the light of the Lamb ever holy,  
She prays for the dear ones she's left for a time—

For her own loving parents, friends true and faithful,  
That all may rejoin her when life will be done.  
Ah! Mary our Queen hears the prayer of her flow'ret,  
And bears it with love to the heart of her Son.

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Then weep not for her, oh! ye children of Mary!

Remember her spirit is hovering nigh;

Each peal of your organ, each breath of devotion,

Ernestine fondly wafts to your Mother on high.

Oh! yes, from Heaven, where thy soul like a dove has flown to thy God, Ernestino, send consolation to the hearts of thy afflicted parents. Acquit a debt which their tenderness, their unlimited devotedness made thee contract, by obtaining for them health and happiness whilst on earth. And thy friends, do not forget them; see their grief, their prayers, and their hopes; obtain for them, that, by imitating thy virtues, they may meet thee one day on that Heavenly shore, to share in thy happiness for all eternity.

We here insert a few lines wherein we think our dear Sister Graduate is viewed in her true light as the modest violet, though we consider the lily an equally appropriate emblem, as representing our dear young friend's angelic purity.

## IN MEMORIAM.

Before the Virgin's lofty throne  
An Angel bright doth stand,  
On his mission sweet he speedeth,  
His golden wings expand.

To blest Marg'rite Bourgeois' parterre  
He's borne in full flight,  
A flower for the Virgin Queen  
He culls before to-night.

Lo! in Mary's own dear Villa,  
'Mid flowers rich and rare,  
We now behold this Angel,  
With beauty passing fair.

Ah! see! how he scans each flow'ret,  
He views them one by one ;  
Still pauses not, with onward flight,  
He skims across the lawn.

When lo! the rose with petals soft  
Displays her lovely face ;  
To the queenly flower, he says,  
Nay friend! you're in your place.

The lily then, with noble pride,  
Lifts up her regal head,  
Yet still he passeth onward,  
Though nought to her he said.

The cactus and the tulip too,  
The lovely jessamine spray,  
The mignonnette and hyacinth,  
Their beauty all display.

Behold him now ! he penetrates  
That modest little glade,  
Where the brooklet murmurs gently  
To the blossoms in the shade.

He stoops down to the violet,  
With meek and modest eye,  
The fragrance of this flow'ret sweet  
Has reached the realms on high.

The Villa's flowers in mourning deep  
Now droop their heads so fair ;  
In vain they'll seek their favorite,  
Throughout the gay parterre.

But list ! the joyful Alleluias,  
That welcome her on high,  
With modest beauty now shall shine  
O'er flowers of brighter dye.

Hark ! hark ! you angel choristers  
With thuribles so bright,  
They lead her to the Virgin Mother,  
'Mid rays of endless light,



And there, our beauteous flow'ret  
Basks in the golden ray;  
Her incense floats before the Lamb,  
For an eternal day.

'Mid joys so sweet, her parents dear  
She never can forget,  
For them and for her friends, she says,  
Dear Lord, they'll meet me yet.

Mary, Mother, Queen and Virgin,  
List! to our humble prayer:  
Let us, like darling Ernestine,  
Thy joys forever share.

As we were sending this little memoir to press the following letter was forwarded to us by the person to whom it was addressed; we insert it textually. At the same time we received a very handsome present for the altar in the name of dear Ernestine: a complete set of candlesticks and a cross for the Tabernacle before which she loved to pray. We did not require this new souvenir of dear Ernestine to keep her still fresh in our memory; however, we do not feel the less grateful to Mrs. C. S. Rodier for the magnificent gift.

VILLA MARIA, Feb. 27th, 1875.

DEAR FRIEND,

My task to-day does not consist in recalling the ordinary occurrences of our beloved Villa home; ah! no, the subject of this letter will be at the same time sad and consoling. It is also a warning and even a condemnation to many convent girls who do not profit of the advantages offered them, and think but of present enjoyment. If they do sometimes cast a thought on the future, it is not that glorious future that will last forever, but on those days when they will be tasting the enchanting cup of pleasure that a deceitful world holds forth to allure them.

Half our term has passed, and Almighty God has chosen two of Mary's children: one He has called to His own special service, and faithful to her Heavenly Spouse she now treads the well beaten track of Virgins. The other was found worthy to receive a still greater grace, the death of the just. As the latter is unknown

to you, pardon me, if I dwell a short time on her endearing qualities.

Our dear Ernestine left one of our convents for the Villa in September. Though she was with us but for the space of a few months, she won the affection and esteem of her teachers and companions: Every one admired her piety, her unhesitating obedience, her constant application to her studies, her humility, her charity, and all those beautiful qualities that adorn the heart of Mary, for whom she had always manifested the greatest love and veneration. She was a "Child of Mary," and a faithful imitator of the virtues of her beautiful model. What more could I say of her goodness and virtue? The heart of Mary lacked no virtue, and our dear Ernestine did all she could to imitate her Blessed Mother.

Towards the beginning of December she returned home on account of her declining health. Consumption, that fatal disease, made rapid progress, but she was perfectly resigned

to the holy will of God. In the midst of her greatest sufferings she was always the same considerate, patient, loving, grateful child, doing her utmost to lessen the trouble she fancied she gave to those around her.

Here also her great love of mortification showed itself more than ever, she refused the little delicacies offered her after taking those remedies most disagreeable to the taste, saying, that as she had but a short time to remain on this earth she could not renounce such an easy way of gaining merit.

We were all aware that she would never recover, but when on the evening of the 19th inst. we were told that she would hardly pass the night we were taken by surprise, because we firmly hoped she would be spared some time longer for the edification of her family and her companions, because we frequently heard from her. On the following day Mother La Nativité, two other nuns, her teachers, and three of our companions went to see her; she was very happy

to see them, and seemed grateful for their visit. That afternoon at half-past three o'clock her spirit passed away, and we doubt not that Mary came to conduct her faithful child to the enjoyment of eternal bliss as she had already obtained for her the happiness of receiving the Sacraments of the dying, plenary indulgences, and to a child of Mary, the privilege scarcely less esteemed, *that* of entering Heaven on a Saturday.

It was this loving child who comforted her parents and obtained for them resignation. How consoling it must indeed have been to see how well their beloved child was prepared to meet her Judge, and how by their joint efforts and God's holy grace they had accomplished the duty imposed upon them.

On Tuesday, the 23rd, the funeral took place in Notre Dame, an immense concourse attended this solemn ceremony; and next to her parents and relations none could have felt more deeply for our darling Ernestine than those who

numbered her among their class-mates in our Villa.

Never shall this funeral service of one so dear be forgotten, and when we think of the companion that is praying for us in Heaven, it will remind us that our hour will soon come; may it also prevent us from attaching ourselves to this land of exile; may her peaceful, happy death encourage us to follow in her footsteps, so that when we shall have arrived at that awful moment, we may be as resigned and as happy as was our dear Ernestine, because all our hope, all our affection, shall be in God.

Cease not to pray that such may be the happy end

Of your loving and affectionate friend,

C. D.

Having just received a copy of the sermon of the month's mind of dear Ernestine through the obliging politeness of the Rev. P. L. Lapierre, we are happy to add it to this small

volume, as another touching souvenir of a day which will always live in the memory of the Graduates of 1875.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

I did not expect, young ladies, to have the pleasure of addressing you this morning, but I could not refuse the invitation of the venerable and worthy religious foundress and superioress of the Establishment of Villa Maria, whom every one calls by the sweet name of "Mother," which she deserves by so many titles.

In the large city of Montreal, in the different parts of Canada, and throughout the United States, how many young persons like yourselves, young ladies, have loved, respected, and venerated the good Mother La Nativité. A great number of religious owe to her skilful direction the development of their sublime vocation.

Hundreds of ladies of the world are indebted to her for being women according to the heart of God—christian mothers who are the hopes of the Church, and the safeguard of society; conse-



quently, these good mothers are happy to confide their children to her, whose wisdom, science and virtue formed their hearts, enlightened their understanding, and of whom they preserve an undying souvenir. Among the latter is the mother of your dear departed companion. This dear child I am confident died the death of which the Prophet speaks, rich in the gifts of God's grace, and after having accomplished the work of her sanctification.

It was beneath the shades of a convent that she grew up, it was under the influence of religious instruction she developed those virtues which rendered her agreeable to God, so dear to her parents and teachers, and which acquired for her your affection during her short sojourn among you. Let us hope that she already enjoys that happiness after which we still sigh.

To die well, young ladies, to die the death of the just is a great science, "the science of sciences," and it is particularly this science which you come to study here, under the



skilful direction of your devoted teachers. They teach you to live well, and that is the secret of dying well, for death is the echo of life. Your pious mistresses help you with their counsels and experience during your pilgrimage from time to eternity. You are every day witness of their devotedness, you are the objects of their maternal care: that, perhaps, which you do not understand sufficiently, the pious and touching reunion of this morning tells you, it is the tender and constant souvenir which your good mothers preserve of you. It outlives all, and it goes even further than the tomb, and when, young ladies, you shall sleep in the shadow of death, they will still think of you, and their affection will follow you by the prayers which they will offer to God in your behalf.

On beholding you, thus united, at the foot of the altar under the eye of Jesus, and the guardianship of angels, I represent to myself Mary in the temple of Jerusalem, preparing herself to fulfil the high destiny to which the Lord called

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her. Be faithful to the principles which these holy religious endeavor to inculcate, practice generously the christian virtues which you see so beautifully exemplified, and then, young ladies, on the day on which God will call you to Himself you will be enrolled with your deceased companion in that army of blessed souls, who sing the glories of Jesus and Mary; that is why the Holy Ghost has said: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." May we all, young ladies, obtain this happy death, which should be the predominant desire of every christian soul, and may you long preserve the dear and venerated Superioress, who teaches you the way to heaven by precept and example.